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ABSTRACT

The racism, individual, institutional, and collective, that permeates American society has resulted in psychological and physical damage to its children--brown, red, black, yellow and white. This racism has created an environment which hinders the learning capacity of all children, even those with special family resources. Similarly, this racism has made it impossible for children to obtain the health services vital to their survival, growth, and development. Removal of external handicaps to the family and support of internal strengths through federally sponsored and financed programs acceptable to and designed by these families is of the highest priority. Programs that deal with discrimination in employment and lack of access to financial resources should take priority over currently popularized programs. The greatest injustice to children can be found in government failure to provide wholesome physical environments and services. A positive vote for this resolution by the White House Conference on Children delegates is vital to all children. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of the original document.] (Authors/JM)

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BLACK CAUCUS POSITION PAPER
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN

Prepared by:
THE BLACK CAUCUS
December 13-18, 1970

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE

OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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LEARNING

We affirm that the capacity to learn and to share experiences, that lead to growth of the individual are universal. This capacity may, however, be seriously limited by environmental conditions or, in some cases, irreversibly damaged by illness or malnutrition. We affirm that the basic institutions in this country as they are shaped by endemic racism create an environment which hinders the growth capacity of all Black children, even those with special resources in family or other. This institutionalized racism hinders the growth of white children with respect to the fundamental need of people to live cooperatively and with mutual respect in our society.

The White House Conference can be instrumental in removing roadblocks to growth and development of poor children in general, and Black children in particular. Toward this end, we commend the following in respect to learning:

- Prenatal Care -- which sets the stage for future learning should be adequately provided.
- First Year -- The vital first year for the majority of Black children is adversely affected by poverty and limited resources for adequate health care.
- Preschool -- The learning process moves into high gear in the preschool years where the resources of Black families and programs for Black children are most inadequate.

We strongly urge that Federal funding be available for Day Care Centers for all children. Such programs should be planned and directed by the people of the community who use them and that this funding not be through State or local welfare agencies. All efforts to commercialize Day Care centers should be resisted.

- School Age -- The twin phenomena of the declining IQ and below capacity performance which afflicts so many Black school age children require drastic redesign of the early school programs and experiences as well as later school years, among the specific recommendations of the Black Caucus were:

1. Education for living in a pluralistic society is needed by all but for Black children, an adequate program of Afro-American studies program is of basic or crucial importance with respect to the development of identity, competence, and confidence. In particular, the books used in schools and libraries need to be revised to make such a program possible.
2. A moratorium must be declared on psychological testing of Black children until sufficient normative statistical data can be standardized to reflect the Black experience.
3. More emphasis should be placed on adequate education rather than on such substitutes as tract systems and special classes.

4. We insist upon quality and excellence in neighborhood schools while we may support bussing only on a two-way basis.
5. Educational programs for Black youths should include political education in the early years and Federal monies should not be allocated to schools which use the Confederate Flags and songs or utilize non-teaching personnel as spies.
6. Specialized training in the Black experience for teachers of Black youngsters is mandatory. Further, the widespread dismissal of Black teachers in relation to integration is discriminatory rather than based on competence. Funds proposed for retraining of Black teachers should be used to end these discriminatory dismissals.
7. We call for an investigation of the alleged misuse of tranquillizers and other drugs on students in school.
8. We reject the misuse of Black students as experimental subjects for research allegedly related to learning and teaching.

H E A L T H

Poor health and poor health services are widely recognized as serious obstacles to survival, growth, and development. These health hazards affect the child before and after birth. The following recommendations are designed to correct this situation.

1. Federally-financed comprehensive family-centered health care should be provided and supported by a National health insurance system.
2. These programs should be neighborhood-based and controlled by recipients of the services.
3. Recruitment and training of Black manpower to meet the expanded care center needs is essential.
4. Federally-financed programs to meet the widespread hunger and malnutrition of Blacks before and after birth should be provided and we support breakfast and lunch programs at school for all Blacks.
5. Effective school health services must be provided to prevent, identify, and resolve health conditions which affect learning adversely, and funds should be withheld from all federally-funded programs for the "disadvantaged" which do not include a health component.
6. Adequate housing regulations which affect health and safety should be enacted where necessary and enforced vigorously. The prevalence of lead poisoning is an example of this need.
7. Adequate funding for research on illnesses which particularly affect the Black community, such as Sickle Cell Anemia, should be provided.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Traditionally, the Black family, even though seriously handicapped by external factors, such as institutional racism, has been and is the principal source for survival and strength for Black children. Removal of external handicaps and support of internal strengths through Federally-sponsored and financed programs is of highest necessity. Such programs must be acceptable to, and designed and implemented with the participation of Black parents. In particular, we reject the widespread notion that the one-parent family is inherently defective.

To remove these handicaps and support the Black family, the following recommendations are made:

1. In view of the growing displacement of, and reduced need for workers as a result of automation and other inventions, which will require increasing governmental support of people able and willing to work. "Work" and "welfare" need to be redefined in our society as equal rights.
2. Effective programs to correct the income imbalance caused by discrimination, e.g., training and employment that lead to upward economic mobility, removal of trade union barriers, removal of union barriers to membership and employment, employment of Blacks in proportion to persons served by programs, equitable upgrading of persons once employed.
3. A National policy of full employment to replace accepted toleration of unemployment which hits the Black community hardest. A National policy of nearly 3% unemployment means that more than 30% of unemployment is in the Black community.
4. The proposed family income maintenance floor should be at least \$6,500.
5. A National policy and programs for construction or renovation of housing on a scale sufficient to meet the needs of Black families. Such housing should be at a cost they can afford for rental or purchase, non-segregated and suitably located.
6. More adequate consumer protection and legal services should be provided for low-income Black families.

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

Next to the Black family, community and physical environment are crucial. Essential services and physical planning are now controlled by persons unrelated to the community or the needs of Black children. This situation must be reversed. An important factor in this reversal would be direct Federal funding of programs designed to meet community needs which local and state authorities fail to meet. Among the recommendations of the Black Caucus are:

1. Insistence that programs to deal with unemployment, underemployment, discrimination in employment, and a lack of access to financial resources for community development should take priority over the currently popularized programs of population control.
2. More effective and enforced Federal regulations and legislation to control pollution to which Black children are more vulnerable because they are concentrated in urban centers, especially the urban centers.
3. Provisional recreational, cultural, and self-development centers should be a basic component of national policy designed to upgrade the lives of American children in the 1970's and especially the poor and the Black for whom no such facilities are now available.

LAWS, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The basic function of law is to protect the rights of persons to exist and to share freely in the common life. In this respect, laws should protect rights, which derive from man's essential humanity and not governments. From these two fundamental premises flow the common responsibilities of individuals, groups, and institutions. The reality is, however, that traditionally and currently, laws fail to protect and limit the rights of Black people in every basic area of life; so much so that administration of injustice is a universal experience of the Black people. Over and above these efforts of Black people to meet their responsibilities are frustrated by the exclusionary character of institutions and the almost universal acceptance of racism by those who are not Black. It is noteworthy that Black people have had to create and maintain organizations to protect their central rights to limit the maladministration of law, and the repeal of discriminatory laws.

Our recommendations include:

1. A Federal commission with adequate powers of investigation and enforcement to prevent and correct practices which result in the unnecessary confinement of Black children to correctional institutions which often permanently disable them and to promote, where necessary, programs of genuine rehabilitation. In particular, we call for the elimination of juvenile court records which become a permanent handicap; This should be done within a reasonable time and not beyond age eighteen or at such time as the person is considered an adult for court purposes.
2. Children who need supervisory care outside of their home should not be detained in facilities designed for criminal offenders or under police supervision. This policy would be especially crucial for those children whose need is for positive guidance and a wholesome environment rather than for judicial action. A children ombudsman could be of value in this connection.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Black Caucus of the 1970 WHCC believes that the broad policies and recommendations set forth above will require persistent presentation, interpretation and action if they are to be effective.

Accordingly, the Caucus recognizes the need and accepts responsibility for creating an ongoing organized effort in behalf of the recommendations of the Caucus. This organization's effort should maintain relations with the White House Conference Staff and should have access to the National Administration where relevant.

RESOLUTION

Whereas the needs of Black children and families are neglected by the Federal Government, and

Whereas the 1970 White House Conference on Children has perpetuated this neglect, and

Whereas the advice of Black parents and other legitimate representatives of the Black community have not been effectively involved in policy making and implementation of programs designed to meet the needs of their children, and

Whereas the American political and economic system needs widespread changes if Black children are to be helped rather than hindered in their growth and development, and

Whereas white racism permeates all strata of society, and

Whereas the succession of wars in this century have left so many Black children fatherless, and

Whereas Federal programs disproportionately advance population control in Black communities, and

Whereas Federal and other programs deny the beauty and dignity of Black culture *and experience*

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Black Caucus of the 1970 White House Conference on Children calls upon the President of the United States to:

1. Call a White House Conference on minority affairs.
2. Establish a permanent national board for implementation of the recommendations and policies of the Black Caucus, as set forth in the attached document.

Be it further resolved that:

1. We request Mr. Stephen Hess to submit to the President, unedited, the report of the Black Caucus.
2. We call upon the President of the United States, the Chairman of this Conference, and our National leadership to take immediate action to correct the deficiencies and national neglect detailed herein.

Be it further resolved that:

1. That the permanent committee established by the Black Caucus be recognized as the appropriate agency for consultation and action with respect to these resolutions and for the policies and recommendations set forth in the attached document.

BLACK CAUCUS FINAL POSITION PAPER
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BLACK CAUCUS OVERRIDING CONCERN

ELIMINATION OF RACISM DEMANDS MANY MEANINGFUL FEDERAL PROGRAMS,
PARTICULARLY AN ADEQUATE FAMILY INCOME MAINTENANCE FLOOR.

Racism, individual, institutional, and collective, that permeates American society has resulted in psychological and physical damage to its children- Black, brown, red, yellow, and white.

This racism has created an environment which hinders the learning capacity of all children, even those with special family resources.

Similarly, this racism has made it impossible for children to obtain the health services vital to their survival, growth, and development.

Removal of external handicaps to the family and support of internal strengths through federally sponsored and financed programs acceptable to and designed by these families is of the highest priority.

Programs that deal with discrimination in employment and lack of access to financial resources should take priority over currently popularized programs.

The greatest injustice to children can be found in ^{gov't} failure to provide wholesome physical environments and services.

A positive vote for this resolution by WHCC delegates is vital to all children.

Submitted by
THE BLACK CAUCUS

Dr. Charles Hurst, Chairman.